The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives a brief summary of important matters affecting labor, occurring in the industrial, legislative and judicial fields, and such other information that will benefit the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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Where liberty dwells, there is my home.—Milton.

WHOLE NO. 1152 WILLIAM GREEN, President WASHINGTON, D. C., SATURDAY, MAY 6, 1933 FRANK MORRISON, Secretary VOL. 23, NO. 9

Editorials

Inflation and the Workers

The enactment of President Roosevelt's inflation bill by the Senate and House of Representatives makes it incumbent upon Labor to mobilize its fighting strength to protect the workers' standard of living from the price boosts which the inflation plan is designed to bring about.

The bill sets up the President as a dictator with absolute and unlimited power to expand the currency to a measure unprecedented since the Civil War.

The President is authorized to have the Federal Reserve Board purchase a maximum of $3,000,000,000 of Government securities in the open market. This is designed to give the bankers a huge cash fund to loan to business concerns for profit-making ventures.

If the bankers refuse to extend this credit, then the President is authorized to issue $3,000,000,000 in new paper money and devise means to get it into the channels of industry and commerce.

The President is also authorized to alter the gold content of the dollar by as much as 50 per cent and to coin silver money at any ratio to gold he sees fit.

The object of the inflation measure is to raise by law and executive orders the prices of everything except the labor power of the workers, their power to perform work and render service to those who own and operate industry for private profit.

This means heavy advances forced by currency inflation in the price of all the commodities which the workers have to buy in order to live.

For the preservation of living standards Labor will have to depend not on statute law or presidential decrees, but upon the economic force of organized strength.

The time has come when Labor must act militantly to protect itself from disaster.

Confronted with the inflation measure and the ballooning of prices scheduled to take place under it, Labor should use every form of economic power inherent in mass organization to persuade employers to boost wages to the limit.

Rationally-conceived and wisely-conducted resistance must be the regular procedure where employers refuse to adjust wages to rising prices.

There is no other way for the workers to protect themselves and their families from drastic reduced living standards.

Labor at World Economic Conference

The request of the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor that President Roosevelt give labor representation at the World Economic Conference which convenes in London on June 12 is a reasonable one.

In a letter to the President, William Green, head of the Federation, stressed the importance of the Council's suggestion:

"It is impossible to conceive of any economic question," he said, "which may be presented to the World Economic Conference for consideration and action that is not of its very character and significance of great importance and of vital interest to labor.

"No group among our country's citizenship will be more directly affected by any action which may be taken by the World Economic Conference than the hosts of labor, the working men and women of the United States."

Mr. Green also impressed upon the President the advantages which the Conference itself would reap from American Labor representation as well as the popular effect of such representation on the masses of our people:

"We are confident that the presentation of Labor's point of view in the United States upon economic questions to those present at the Conference will be helpful and constructive.

"In addition, a most favorable state of mind will be created in our own country at a time when great social and industrial unrest prevails if Labor is accorded recognition through the appointment of a representative or representatives upon the Economic Commission which will attend the London Conference."

As a precedent for Labor representation, Mr. Green referred to the action of President Coolidge in appointing a representative of the American Federation of Labor to act in an advisory capacity at an Economic Conference held in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1927.

If President Roosevelt granted the Executive Council's request, Mr. Green's letter said he would "esteem it a very great privilege and pleasure to submit the name or names of representatives of Labor who I believe are thoroughly capable and competent to render distinguished service" for appointment to the Commission which will represent the United States at the Conference.

Labor's Rights in 30-Hour Week Bill

The determination of the American Federation of Labor to guarantee that the workers under the Federal six-hour day and five-day week bill shall not be deprived of the trade union rights was reiterated by William Green, president of the Federation, in a letter to Congressman Connery, chairman of the House Labor Committee.

In Mr. Green's statement in favor of the bill before the Labor Committee he urged the inclusion of this amendment:

"Provided, that the workers in any mine, quarry, mill, cannery, workshop, or manufacturing establishment within the provisions of Section 1 of this act shall not be denied by their employer the free exercise of the right to belong to a bona fide labor organization and to collectively bargain for their wages through their own chosen representatives."

In his letter to Representative Connery emphasizing the tremendous importance of his proposal, Mr. Green said:

"I can not believe that there will be any serious objection to this amendment. It is nothing more than a reiteration in a very condensed way of the public policy declaration of the United States which is included in the anti-injunction bill passed by Congress a short time ago.

"Surely working people have a right to organize and to engage in collective bargaining. Congress can very well endorse the exercise of such a right and make it clear in this legislation that no employe shall be denied the right to join a bona fide labor organization if he desires to do so."

There are twenty-one members of the Labor Committee of the House of Representatives. When the committee roll is called on Mr. Green's amendment, the vote should be unanimous in its favor.

Dismissal Wage for Federal Employes

The introduction by Congressman William T. Schulte of the dismissal wage bill for Federal workers, prepared by the American Federation of Labor in cooperation with the American Federation of Government Employes, places this matter of equity squarely before the Congress.

The bill undertakes to give a modest amount of economic protection to deserving employes of the Government who may be dismissed before they are eligible for the benefits of the retirement law.

It provides for a dismissal wage after a minimum employment period of one year. The amount of the compensation wage would be based on the total length of service of the employe and the average monthly basic remuneration received during the twelve months immediately preceding the date of dismissal.

The major object of the bill is to partially shield Government employes from victimization resulting from dismissals in connection with the consolidation of various departments and bureaus.

In describing its purpose, William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor, said:

"A fair, just and equitable dismissal law would in operation soften the blow which employes dismissed from the service of the Federal Government are bound to feel. It will help tide the dismissed employes over the very difficult period between their dismissal from the employ of the Government and the date when they may find new employment in other callings.

"Let the Government be just in dealing with its employes, let it apply justice to dismissed workers by paying them a sum of money classified as a dismissal wage, meager though it may be, but helpful to the distressed worker at a time when such help is badly needed."

The Schulte dismissal wage bill was referred to the House Committee on the Civil Service. Hearings on the proposal will be held in the near future.

A. F. of L. Council Urges Roosevelt to Push 30-Hour Week and Five Billion Dollar Public Works Program to Make Jobs for Idle Millions

Five-Day Week for Government Employes Without Pay Reduction Sought—Labor Representation at World Economic Conference Asked—Wage Increases Demanded—Pleas Made for Protection of Railway Employes from Dismissal Under Transportation Reorganization and Stabilization of Coal Industry to Guarantee Miners Trade Union Rights and Decent Wages.

Washington.—The Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor, headed by William Green, asked President Roosevelt to urge upon the special session of Congress the speedy enactment of the Federal six-hour day and five-day week bill and a public works construction program of not less than $5,000,000,000 as employment relief measures.

The Council also urged the five-day week for Government employes, stabilization of the coal industry in the interest of the coal miners, protection of railway employes from loss of employment under the administration's scheme for railroad reorganization, and labor representation at the forthcoming World Economic Conference in London.

Mr. Green's Statement

In a statement regarding the Executive Council's conference with the President, Mr. Green said:

"The Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor called upon the President to pay their respects and to officially submit the following recommendations and requests:

"A request was submitted that the President appoint a representative or representatives of Labor to serve upon the Commission appointed to represent the United States at the World Economic Conference which will be held in London on June 12, 1933.

"The Executive Council regards the London Economic Conference as of very great importance because it will be called upon to consider and act upon economic questions which are of vital importance to the wage earners not only of the United States but throughout the world.

"Labor is of the opinion that the recommendations and the point of view of Labor upon economic, social and industrial questions should be submitted directly by representatives of Labor when questions of this character are considered and acted upon at the London Conference.

Five Billion Dollars for Public Works

"The seriousness of the unemployment situation was stressed.

"The President was urged to recommend a large and comprehensive public works program, such a program to embrace within it all forms of public construction such as public buildings, road building, naval construction and ship building, reforestation, flood control, public reclamation, soil erosion, and self-liquidating projects such as slum clearance, grade crossing elimination, housing and state and civic enterprises.

"An appropriation of not less than five billion dollars should be made for such public works program.

"While Labor realizes that a public works program of this character would not provide a complete remedy for unemployment it would in operation create work opportunities for a very large number of people who are idle.

Thirty-Hour Week

"The President was asked to urge upon Congress the enactment of the 6-hour day and the 5-day work week bill.

"Labor believes that the enactment of such a law is imperatively necessary if the unemployment emergency is to be dealt with in a constructive way and if work opportunities are to be created for the millions of people who are idle.

Wage Increases Demanded

"The Council expressed grave apprehension over the economic and social effect which the wage reduction policy pursued by both the Government and private industry is having upon the lives and the minds of laboring people everywhere.

"The Council expressed the opinion that the time had come when a halt should immediately be called to the imposition of wage reductions and instead wage increases must be inaugurated in order to avoid a further decline in buying power which might result from currency inflation.

"The Council requested the President to initiate and support legislation providing for the application of the 5-day work week to Government employes without reduction in pay.

"Such action would offset to a very great degree the ill effect which followed the imposition of the reduction in salaries and wages upon Government employes.

Problem of Railroad Workers

"We expressed a deep interest in the problem of the railroad workers and in legislation which is being proposed for the control and administration of the transportation systems of the nation.

"The unemployment situation is so intense and so serious as to make all thinking people gravely apprehensive if unemployment is to be further aggravated through a dismissal of railroad workers as a result of railroad consolidation.

"We urged that such an outcome be avoided and we advised the President that the American Federation of Labor was giving a full measure of support to the railroad workers in the policies which they have outlined regarding the legislation and the protection of those employed upon the transportation lines of the nation.

Decent Wages for Coal Miners

"The Council called the attention of the President to the tragic situation which prevails in the mining industry.

"The miners employed in the non-union coal fields are compelled to accept a rate of pay far below a subsistence level.

"Bad as economic conditions are in the coal mining industry they are obviously worse in the coal mining industry.

"The Council urgently requested the President to call upon Congress to enact legislation recommended by the officers of the United Mine Workers of America which is designed to stabilize the coal mining industry and to guarantee to the miners decent wages and the enjoyment of decent conditions of employment through the exercise of collective bargaining participated in by representatives of their own choosing."

All Government Employes Should Have Legal Right to Form Unions

President of A. F. of L. Urges Adoption of Senator Bratton's Amendment Permitting Firemen in District of Columbia to Join International Association of Fire Fighters.

BULLETIN

Washington.—The United States Senate adopted the Bratton amendment to the District of Columbia appropriation bill which permits the officers and members of the District Fire Department to join labor organizations which do not use the strike for any purpose.

Washington.—All Government employees should have the legal right to belong to labor unions, declared William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor, in a letter to United States Senator Bratton of New Mexico urging unqualified support of the Senator's amendment to the District of Columbia appropriation bill providing that the fire fighters of the District may become members of the International Association of Fire Fighters.

Declaring that the Bratton amendment meets with the hearty approval of the officers and members of the American Federation of Labor, Mr. Green said:

Right to Organize Is Vital

"The American Federation of Labor holds that all workers, whether employed by the Government or in private industry, should be permitted to exercise the right to unite and organize for mutual helpfulness and for the purpose of improving their social, economic, and industrial status. We regard exercise of the right of all working people to organize as a vital, ordinal right which should not be interfered with."

Strikes Prohibited

The Bratton amendment provides "that no officer or member of the Fire Department of the District of Columbia, payment for whose services shall be made from this or any other appropriation made for like purposes, shall be prohibited from becoming or being a member of any organization so long as such organization does not permit, claim, hold or use the strike for any purpose whatsoever, notwithstanding anything heretofore to the contrary."

Public Is Protected

Mr. Green pointed out that "such an amendment serves two very distinct and definite purposes. First, it guarantees the right of employes of the Fire Department of the District of Columbia to organize if they wish to do so. Second, it amply protects the District of Columbia against interruption in service and eliminates the threat of a resort to strike as a means of settling any dispute over wages or conditions of employment which may arise.

"Surely with such ample protection and with such established guarantees," Mr. Green concluded, "there can be no objection on the part of Congress or of the people to the exercise of the right of the firemen of the District of Columbia to organize for mutual self-helpfulness."

"I trust that you and the members of Congress will share with me this point of view. I strongly urge the adoption of the amendment."

Labor Wins on Muscle Shoals

The revised text of the Muscle Shoals bill as it passed the United States Senate includes the wage provision incorporated in the House bill at the request of the officials of the American Federation of Labor.

The provision stipulates that all contracts made by the Tennessee Valley Authority, which is set up to administer the vast projects coming under the Muscle Shoals scheme, shall contain a provision that laborers and mechanics employed on the work shall be paid "not less than the prevailing rate of wages for work of a similar nature prevailing in the vicinity." The same stipulation is applied to work done directly by the Tennessee Valley Authority.

The bill also contains the provision that if disputes arise as to what are the prevailing wage rates, the matter shall be adjusted by the Secretary of Labor, who in determining the matter is required "to give due regard to those rates which have been secured through collective agreement by representatives of employers and employes."

This provision means that the union wage rate will be held to be the prevailing wage rate.

The wage-rate stipulation had already been adopted by the House of Representatives. Its approval by the Senate insures its retention in the final text by the Senate and House conferees who will adjust the differences in the two bills.

$500,000,000 for Unemployment Relief

The approval of both Houses of Congress of the La Follette-Costigan-Wagner bill appropriating $500,000,000 for the relief of the unparalleled distress among the thirteen million unemployed workers and their dependents is a distinct achievement for the American Federation of Labor.

For month after month officials of the Federation, knowing the intense suffering among the masses because of the failure of State, municipal, and private charity to provide the destitute with the commonest necessities of life, have urged the imperative need of a large Federal relief appropriation upon the Government. By the enactment of the La Follette-Costigan-Wagner bill the position of Labor receives legal sanction.

The relief fund of $500,000,000 is divided into two equal portions.

One sum of $250,000,000 will be used to grant relief to the States by means of allowances, paid quarterly, equal to one-third of all public moneys expended by a State and its subdivisions on unemployment relief.

The remaining $250,000,000 will be used for grants of any size to States when it is found that funds available within a State, combined with the money received under the regular allotment, are insufficient to meet relief needs.

The $500,000,000 will be provided by the Reconstruction Finance Corporation. The fund will be administered by a Federal Emergency Relief Administrator paid a net annual salary of $8,500.

UPHOLD SCHOOL TEACHER STANDARDS, GREEN SAYS

A. F. of L. President Fights Senate "Economy" Measure to Ignore Eligible List in Appointing Temporary Teachers in District of Columbia Public Schools.

BULLETIN

Washington—The Senate adopted the amendment to the District of Columbia Appropriation bill prescribing that temporary teachers for the schools of the District shall be appointed from the eligible list. The amendment, sponsored by the American Federation of Labor, was presented by Senator Bratton of New Mexico.

Washington.—A vigorous protest against lowering the standards for teachers in the public schools of the nation's capital was made by William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor, in a letter addressed to each of the ninety-six members of the U. S. Senate criticizing an amendment to the appropriation bill for the District of Columbia containing a stipulation relative to the appointment of temporary teachers and the filling of vacancies.

Eligible List Defended

The amendment appeared to be conceived for the purpose of reducing the cost of public education here by paying lower salaries to teachers without directly attacking the salary schedules. One provision of the amendment authorizes the appointment of "qualified" temporary teachers notwithstanding the eligible list.

The word 'qualified' obviously has little meaning if the statute destroys the eligibility requirements for teachers," Mr. Green said. "The effect of the amendment would in practice subject the children of the District of Columbia to the care of less qualified teachers than they could have were this amendment not in force.

Another provision drawing Mr. Green's protest provides that in filling vacancies in the public school system teachers now in the system shall have preference "so far as practicable." Mr. Green pointed out that "this provision would permit the appointment of new teachers possessing less than the legal eligibility requirements in place of persons in the system legally qualified teachers when such changes would appear to be more practicable."

False Economy

"I do not at this time," he said, "question the wisdom of the employment of temporary teachers as I am cognizant of the fact that the appointment of a temporary teacher saves the Government some money because the temporary teacher cannot be paid longevity for teaching service before his appointment to the local system.

However, if temporary teachers were appointed from the eligible list the saving would likewise be effected, and the children of Washington would have the privilege of being taught by highly qualified teachers.

Protect School Standards

To protect the schools against the lowering of teaching standards, Mr. Green urged the members of the Senate to amend the bill by providing that the year 1934 shall be appointed teachers in the public schools of the District of Columbia shall be appointed from the eligible list, and that the words "so far as possible" be stricken from the bill.

"That the Senate would needlessly and ruthlessly seek to destroy the standards of teaching in the schools of the nation's capital, as the proposed amendment would do, is to Labor unthinkable," Mr. Green's letter concluded. "I trust that we may have your active support for these suggested changes to be offered to this bill when it comes up before the Senate for consideration."

Shirt Workers Close Shops

Hartford, Conn.—Shirt shop workers of Bridgeport, New Haven, Derby, Branford and Wallingford quit on a one-day holiday to celebrate the announcement of a movement by the Connecticut Labor Department to abolish "sweating" in the state.

About 600 Danbury hatters quit work when their demands for living wages were refused by the employers.

AFL Council Asks $300,000,000 For Naval Construction Projects In the Government Navy Yards

Jobs for Many Government Employes Would Be Saved and Thousands of Idle Workers Employed Under Fair Labor Conditions.

Washington.—The Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor, in session at the A. F. of L. Headquarters here, recommended to Congress that $300,000,000 of the proposed $3,000,000,000 construction appropriation be allotted for naval construction to be carried on in Government Navy Yards.

In announcing the action of the Council, William Green, President of the Federation, said:

"The Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor recommended to the Congress of the United States that three hundred million dollars for Naval construction be set aside and allotted out of the three billion dollar construction appropriation.

"It is the opinion of the Executive Council that the Naval construction program thus recommended should be carried on by the Government and in the Government Navy Yards.

"Such a policy would mean that many government employes could retain their positions and thus avoid large dismissals from the government service; and furthermore that not only would thousands of additional workers be employed but that Naval construction would be carried on under fair, just and humane conditions of employment.

"The Executive Council submitted this recommendation to the President and to Honorable Carl Vinson, Chairman of the House Naval Committee. The Executive Council will call upon the Members of Congress to support the Naval construction program thus recommended, and to provide for the suggested appropriation for Naval construction at the earliest possible date.

"We firmly believe that the development and construction of the Naval strength of the Nation at the point approximating the provisions of the London Treaty will be to the best interests of the Nation, and in addition such action will result in the creation of work opportunities for thousands of unemployed working people."

Include Newspapers and Periodicals in 30-Hour Week Bill, Haggerty Says

Washington.—A strong argument for the inclusion of newspapers and periodicals in the Federal 30-hour week bill was made before the House Labor Committee by John B. Haggerty, president of both the International Allied Printing Trades Association and the International Brotherhood of Bookbinders.

Mr. Haggerty said that at least 20 per cent of the members of the printing craft international unions are totally unemployed, with 50 per cent working not more than one, two or three days per week and the remaining 26 per cent on a five-day or 44-hour week.

30-Hour Week Is Practicable

Mr. Haggerty told the committee that the Board of Governors of the International Allied Printing Trades Association, at its recent meeting in Washington, declared there was no reason for excluding the newspaper and periodical publishing industry from the operation of the Black-Connery bill restricting the hours of work per day to six and the work week to five days. The board was also of the opinion that the 30-hour week could be applied to newspapers and periodicals without any great inconvenience to the employers.

He pointed out that to exempt the newspapers and periodicals from the 30-hour week and apply it to commercial printing establishments would create a division in the industry which would inconvenience the employers and produce chaos and misunderstanding within the trade, since the lines of work are not definitely separated.

Minimum Wage Opposed

"We wish to make it clear," Mr. Haggerty said, "that we do not approve the establishment of a minimum wage unless the wage is established in printing centers by printing trade workers is used as the minimum. We take this position because with rare exceptions a minimum wage becomes the maximum as well. Modern civilization demands that labor, the very backbone of our Nation, shall participate together with other groups, in increasingly improved standards and opportunities to realize its ideals."

The printing trades workers, Mr. Haggerty said, also urged that the bill should apply to the products of foreign as well as domestic workers.

Governor Lehman Signs Minimum Wage Law For Women and Minors in New York State

Albany, N. Y.—Governor Herbert H. Lehman signed the Wald minimum wage bill fixing mandatory pay standards for women and children in industry, and vetoed the Desmond bill, which applied to men as well as women, with publication of the names of the offenders the only penalty.

The Wald bill, introduced by Senator Albert Wald of New York City, sets up permanent legislation. The Desmond bill, introduced by Senator Thomas C. Desmond of Orange, was an emergency measure.

The principle of fair wage legislation for women and minors should not be restricted to an emergency," Gov. Lehman said in announcing his approval of the Wald bill. "It is obviously of extreme social importance that at all times women and minors in industry be given State protection in the fixing of wage levels, so that the return for their labor shall be commensurate with the fair value of the services rendered and sufficient to meet the minimum cost of living necessary for health."

The Wald bill, the Governor added, "avoids the pitfalls in the statute law of the State. It has been drawn by experts with a view to meeting the objections which caused the Supreme Court of the United States to declare minimum wage legislation unconstitutional several years ago.

"It has been prepared with a scientific view toward administrative regulation and effective enforcement.

"Its mandatory features are necessary in order to prevent the profiteering violations which the present trend of industrial conditions would indicate to be probable.

"Mandatory enforcement of fair wages for women and minors is of primary importance, to which the State should direct its first attention."

30-Hour Week Makes More Jobs for Linen Mill Workers

Webster, Mass.—Adoption of the 30-hour week in several departments, coupled with an increase in orders, has added 200 new names to the payroll of the Stevens Linen Works here in two weeks. Approximately 1,000 employes now are on the rolls, according to H. Wadsworth Crawford, Stevens agent.

Lehman Appoints Woll and Beha To N. Y. State Insurance Board

Albany, N. Y.—Governor Herbert H. Lehman appointed Matthew Woll, president of the Union Labor Life Insurance Company, and James A. Beha, a director of the same organization, to membership on the New York State Advisory Insurance Board, whose powers are to advise with the New York State Superintendent of Insurance and to make recommendations to him on matters submitted to it.